

COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED PRESERVATION OF  
*SYNAPTIPHILUS* CANU & CUÉNOT, 1892. Z.N.(S.) 1664

(see present volume pages 58–59)

By R. U. Gooding (*Department of Zoology, University of Singapore,  
Singapore, 10.*)

I wish to support the proposal by Drs. Laubier and Stock that the generic name *Synaptiphilus* be conserved and its senior synonym *Colaceutes* abandoned.

Although the former name may seem to have been used only a few times in the literature, it was sufficiently firmly established by the original papers of Canu (Canu & Cuénot, in Cuénot, 1892; Canu, 1894) and confirmed by the recent revision of Bocquet & Stock (1957b)—all of which are in one of the present international languages of zoology (French) and published in well-known journals—that there has been until now no question of its validity. A measure of this is the readiness with which the one junior synonym, *Remigulus* T. & A. Scott, 1893 (*Ann. Mag. nat. Hist.* (6) 12 : 242), was accepted as such by its authors (1897). Some of the papers Laubier & Stock cite are also general faunistic surveys or deal mainly with the echinoderm host-group. Finally, *Synaptiphilus* is the nominal type-genus of the family Synaptiphilidae Bocquet, 1952. Although this is not currently recognised as valid, the systematics of the group to which it belongs is by no means settled.

The type-species of *Synaptiphilus*, *S. luteus* Canu & Cuénot in Cuénot, 1892, is also well-known now. However, I think the value of Laubier & Stock's proposal would be enhanced by the addition of one designating a neotype for *S. luteus*. (The remainder of the paragraph should be construed not as such a proposal but simply as the basis for this statement.) The species was originally stated (Canu & Cuénot in Cuénot, 1892 : 19) to be "commensal sur les téguments de *Synapta inhaerens* Müll. (Roscoff), des *Syn. inhaerens* et *digitata* Mont. (Arcachon)." No type host, type locality nor holotype was designated. Later, Cuénot (1912 : 62–74) concluded that previous records of *Synapta inhaerens* from Roscoff and Arcachon should be attributed to *Leptosynapta galliennei* (Herapath). Bocquet & Stock (1957b) have separated three species of *Synaptiphilus*: *luteus*, *tridens* (T. & A. Scott, 1893) and *cantacuzenei* Bocquet & Stock, 1957b; they suggested that all records of *S. luteus* from *Labidoplax* (= *Synapta*) *digitata* probably refer to *S. cantacuzenei*. Thus, *S. luteus* appears to be limited to *L. galliennei* and is at present known only from Roscoff and Arcachon (on the Channel and Atlantic coasts of France respectively). The original specimens are almost certainly no longer in existence: they are definitely not in the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris (letter from Prof. M. Vachon, 11 April 1957). But specimens from Roscoff (which was mentioned first in the original publication) are available (Bocquet & Stock, 1957b); and there is no indication that this locality is in any way an abnormal one in the range of the animal.

While *Synaptiphilus* is a well-known and well-established genus, *Colaceutes*, on the other hand, was defined in an obscure Latin publication, apparently with

very limited distribution, was misrepresented in the only subsequent reference (C. B. Wilson, 1932) and is probably known to very few zoologists, even specialists. There is also the statement by Laubier & Stock that they have been unable to identify the type-species, *C. muelleri*, with any of the three forms of *Synaptiphilus* known from the same host, or with any other. However, this need not imply that it is unlikely *C. muelleri* will be found again: all the three forms of *Synaptiphilus* they mention have themselves only been brought to light within the last few years (1957 on) and none is known from as far east as the type locality for *C. muelleri* (near Trieste, in the Bay of Muggia). It may also be noted that the location "Britain", given for *S. cantacuzenei* in Laubier & Stock's proposal, is a misprint for Brittany, France. Attempts which I have made to locate the type-series of specimens of *C. muelleri* have been unsuccessful.

Since it is quite clear that the two generic names designate the same taxon, in my opinion, this is a case where stability can best be maintained by exercise of the plenary powers to validate *Synaptiphilus* rather than by retaining its senior synonym.